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Chairman:	Mr. ELARABY	(Egypt)
later:	Mr. SUH (Vice-Chairman)	(Republic of Korea)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

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GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ITEMS

Mr. MOUSHAITI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee, which deals with international security and disarmament matters. Your competence, diplomatic skills and vast experience in relation to the questions under discussion are our best guarantee of success.

I should like to congratulate also the other officers of the Committee. In this context, my delegation would be remiss if it failed to thank your predecessor, the Polish Ambassador, Mr. Mroziewicz, for the excellent and able manner in which he steered the work of the First Committee during the last session of the General Assembly.

My delegation cannot but seize this opportunity to express to you, Mr. Chairman, its solidarity, sympathy and condolences with the brotherly Egyptian people following the earthquake disaster that struck your country. We pray that God Almighty will alleviate the dire consequencdes of this tragedy for the Egyptian people. And the same applies to Algeria, Iran, Colombia and Japan.

Our world is is in the throes of successive changes and transformations in international relations. The past few years have witnessed great developments, which posed and still pose new challenges to the international community, and afford new opportunities that should be put to good use. As you, Mr. Chairman, said in your introductory statement, these changes are as much a source of optimism as a cause of concern. We share your optimism and your concern.

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

While my delegation welcomes every positive development in international relations and the end of confrontation between East and West, as well as the pursuit of dialogue, negotiation, cooperation and the reduction of tension between all countries, as a means of settling disputes, in conformity with the new climate that is emerging in international relations, it welcomes and encourages also every glimmer of hope with regard to the strengthening of international security and of general and complete disarmament, in a context of a scale of priorities that deals with every category of weaponry according to the gravity of the threats involved. In the forefront, are weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, then chemical and bacteriological weapons, down to excessively harmful and destructive conventional weapons.

All encouraging developments in these areas are steps in the right direction, which, it is hoped, will lead to the full renunciation of the current strategic thinking based on nuclear weapons and military superiority. It is to be hoped that this will ultimately rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. That would be a genuine contribution indeed to international security, especially now that everyone has come to realise that security through the stockpiling of weaponry is a serious delusion. Military might weakens and does not strengthen security.

I need not stress that political objectives cannot be achieved by military means. Logic and reason dictate that comprehensive security should be for all and that security for all can be achieved only through complete nuclear disarmament, the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, the balanced reduction of conventional weapons at both the regional and international levels and through the achievement of security at the lowest level of conventional armament. Side by side with this, the vast resources

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

that are being wasted now on armaments should be channelled to projects that would stimulate human and economic development. This would eliminate the real and root causes of threats to international security, such as poverty, famine, disease, population explosion, deterioration of the environment, scarcity of drinking water, drought and desertification, among other things, including ethnic and religious conflicts and other regional questions.

The United Nations has a unique role to play in all this and bears a major responsibility with regard to all issues of disarmament and international security. Consequently all States, large and small, have a right and a duty to participate in the multilateral efforts aimed at disarmament, on an equal footing if we are to impart to such action universality and a sense of commitment.

Therefore, my delegation joins those who have already called for expanding the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, as that body is the single most important multilateral forum dealing with the question of disarmament. Disarmament issues concern all States. In this respect, we stress that bilateral talks should complement multilateral talks.

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

It is regrettable indeed that some of the nuclear-weapons States have failed to show any genuine commitment to general and complete nuclear disarmament within the specific time-frame called for in Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and have failed to make any commitment to provide concrete and tangible security guarantees and appropriate technical assistance to all non-nuclear States.

It is indeed our fervent hope that nuclear States will be convinced that it is absurd to continue to develop and stockpile nuclear weapons and will be persuaded to halt the arms race in outer space.

While my delegation welcomes the formulation at the Disarmament Conference of an agreement on chemical weapons, despite all the loopholes that have been highlighted by those who spoke before me, we would have liked to witness the same degree of zeal a number of developed States have shown with regard to chemical weapons reflected in the area of nuclear weapons as the latter category of weapons is much more lethal and pose a much greater threat to international peace and security than any other category of weaponry.

It is extremely important for us to deal with disarmament issues on a universal and comprehensive basis, in order to avoid imbalances, inequality, discrimination and the widening of the gap between North and South. Proliferation questions in particular must be addressed through multilateral negotiations that aim at the formulation of universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory disarmament conventions. We believe that the increasingly stringent constraints imposed by the developed countries through export-control mechanisms under the guise of non-proliferation measures merely lead to the hampering of economic and social development in the developing countries. Our wish is that no people in the world should be deprived of the

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

benefits of advanced and sophisticated technological and scientific research in the nuclear field to be used for peaceful purposes and for development programmes such as water desalination, the protection of the environment, the eradication of disease and for the exploration and prospecting of resources in the interests of all peoples without discrimination, restriction or coercion.

With regard to conventional and other weapons, my delegation stresses anew the need for this question to be addressed within a comprehensive framework aimed at reducing the build-up, stockpiling and production of such weapons, with due attention to the legitimate security requirements of each State. As I said before, this question should be addressed within a comprehensive framework that should embrace both supplier and recipient instead of favouring a certain group of States, and which would take into account the causes behind the arms race. In this context we also stress anew that finding just solutions to regional problems is necessary for creating the appropriate conditions that would enable countries to channel their resources to development rather than to weapons acquisition.

My country is situated in a region that was the cradle of the oldest civilizations. The Mediterranean is the sea that links all the continents of the ancient world, Europe, Africa and Asia and continues to be, just as it was in the past, the meeting place of the world's trade routes. Libya, as a small developing country, rejoices at every step that is taken in the direction of disarmament, the consolidation of security and cooperation and beneficial exchanges between peoples all over the world.

We have proposed numerous initiatives to promote this orientation. As examples, I mention quite a few, such as:

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

Our initiative to convene a special session of the General Assembly to deal with all matters of concern to the members of the international community, especially strategic weapons and weapons of mass destruction, as outlined in document A/46/840 of 9 January 1992. This stemmed from our desire to strengthen international security and to transform the Mediterranean into a zone of security, cooperation and peace.

We have enthusiastically and earnestly contributed to the building of the Arab Maghreb Union. This is an important contribution to the consideration of peace, stability and cooperation in the region.

We have effectively contributed to the meetings of the Five plus Five forum of the countries of the Western Mediterranean, with the aim of strengthening cooperation and confidence-building at the regional level. We have cooperated fully with all our neighbours in this context.

Because of the close relationship between security and cooperation in the Mediterranean basin, security and cooperation in Europe, and international security, my country has consistently called for transforming the Mediterranean into a lake of security, peace and cooperation by freeing it of the presence of foreign bases and fleets that threatens stability and peace not only in the region but all over the world.

As stated in the address of the Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly:

"... my country would like to underscore the findings in the final declaration of the Tenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement Countries, which called for supporting the efforts aimed at transforming the Mediterranean into a zone of peace, security and cooperation on the basis

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

of the principles of respect for the equality and sovereignty of States, non-intervention in the internal affairs of others, and the non-use or threat of force." (A/47/PV.25, pp. 14-15)

My delegation, as party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and to the Geneva Protocol, supports all efforts and endeavours aimed at halting the nuclear arms race and at eliminating nuclear weapons. Therefore my country welcomes the latest agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on the reduction of their nuclear arsenals. We also welcome the accession by France and China to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In order to expand the scope of initiatives in this direction, my delegation supports the establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in Africa and the Middle East. Furthermore, we support the proposal by Egypt aimed at making the Middle East region a region free of weapons of mass destruction, although we know that this objective is impeded by continuous difficulties because of Israel's continued production, acquisition and stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction, Israel's continued testing of these weapons and their delivery systems and its refusal to respond to repeated international calls for the submission of its nuclear installations to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency according to Security Council resolution 487 (1981).

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

In view of the special and distinctive nature of the Middle East, a region that is beset by threats and tensions, it is necessary to deal with its problems promptly and decisively and, above all, to guarantee that weapons of mass destruction should not be introduced into it.

It is well known that the security of all countries is interdependent and interrelated and that, consequently, it should be dealt with as an interdependent whole if we are to achieve appropriate balance and ensure equal security for all, regionally and internationally, without discrimination or selectivity.

In view of the sensitive nature of the situation in the Middle East, an agreement such as the chemical weapons Convention (CWC) cannot be dealt with in isolation from efforts made towards the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the international safeguards regime. As regards, verification regimes and other provisions concerning concrete international guarantees, the Secretary-General pointed out in his "Study on effective and verifiable measures which would faciliate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East" that:

> "Nuclear capabilities are linked to chemical weapons, chemical weapons to conventional arms, conventional arms to political conflict... Yet all the separate elements must be worked on concurrently, for it will not be possible to settle any one piece of the problem unless it is clear that progress is being made on the other pieces as well". (A/45/435, para. 51)

My delegation wishes to stress anew that the world will not enjoy the peace and security we all aspire after unless nuclear testing is halted and

(Mr. Moushaiti, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

totally banned as a first major step toward disarmament, and unless the vast amounts now being spent on those tests are re-channelled to development in order to create prosperity and wealth for all, especially now that we have come to realise that security cannot be achieved through nuclear or military deterrence.

Therefore, my delegation strongly urges all members of the international community to support the re-establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, with a clear mandate to prepare a draft convention for the comprehensive prohibition of the use, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

We hope there will be the necessary political will to achieve this goal so that our world may become more secure and stable. The achievement of such a goal would be the first step towards a collective security regime and a new world order that is more just, stable, secure and peaceful, free from injustice, social inequality, political repression and economic coercion. That would be the world order under which all peoples may reap the fruits of disarmament, and the dividends of peace, of constructive and fruitful cooperation. It is then that all will enjoy tranquillity, prosperity and harmony.

Mr. ADALA (Kenya): Permit me on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf to join previous speakers in conveying to you, Sir, our warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am particularly pleased to see you, the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt, a country with which Kenya shares common historical experiences and fruitful bonds of brotherly and friendly relations, assume the high office of

(Mr. Adala, Kenya)

Chairman of our Committee. In congratulating you and other members of the Bureau, I wish to take this opportunity to assure you of the full cooperation and total support of the Kenya delegation.

We are encouraged by recent important developments in the field of disarmament. Positive steps have been taken in Geneva through the successful conclusion of the draft chemical-weapons convention. France and China have finally acceded to the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the United States Government has announced a one-year moratorium on nuclear testing. We believe that these encouraging trends will continue and lead to further substantive progress in nuclear disarmament efforts and ultimately towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

While we welcome a temporary moratorium, it still remains our view that a comprehensive test ban is the most viable and appropriate tool for practical arms control policies geared to preventing further escalation of qualitative arms competition. In order to add credibility to the NPT, the nuclear Powers should demonstrate equal commitment to the principal aims of the partial test-ban Treaty:

"the speediest possible achievement of an agreement on general and complete disarmament"

and

"the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time".

For decades African States have consistently demonstrated their commitment to the cause of denuclearization of the continent, as set out in the 1964 Cairo Declaration of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). South Africa's entry into a full-scope safeguards agreement with the International

(Mr. Adala, Kenya)

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is indeed a welcome development. It paves the way for African States to look urgently into modalities and elements for the preparation and implementation of a convention or treaty on the denuclearisation of Africa and its surrounding islands.

On this same premise, Kenya fully supports the draft resolution sponsored by the African Group regarding dumping of radioactive wastes, which have grave regional and international security implications. Dumping of any nuclear, industrial or radiological wastes into any developing country's territory, for whatever purpose, is unacceptable, and we join in calling on the international community to condemn any companies or States that have engaged in the dumping of such hazardous wastes in neighbouring Somalia, as indicated in recent reports.

(Mr. Adala, Kenya)

As a developing country, Kenya has neither military plans nor geopolitical ambitions beyond the defence of its territorial integrity. As part of an increasingly interdependent world, however, we attach great importance to developing and maintaining good relations with all countries as a vital factor for breaking down barriers of mistrust, which can lead only to misunderstanding and conflict. Therefore, the confidence- and security-building process under way in other regions of the world is indeed a valuable lesson for us in Africa. Kenya would like to see the strengthening of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and therefore calls upon the General Assembly to pay greater attention to the promotion of confidence-building measures as an important way to reduce mistrust, prevent war and help promote the limitation of arms acquisition in Africa, thereby enabling us to devote the meagre resources we have to national economic and social programmes.

In July 1990, in Addis Ababa, Heads of State or Government of member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development issued a declaration on peace, stability and development. The declaration, which reflects a commitment at the highest level by the States of this important and sensitive subregion of Africa to launch a broad confidence-building process, was aimed at preventing an arms race in the area, thereby promoting the non-use of force and ensuring peace and development, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and of the Organization of African Unity. The tragic situation now prevailing in the Horn of Africa - particularly in Somalia - and the influx of thousands of refugees into Kenya have dramatically complicated the situation in the Horn and thwarted the efforts of the Heads of State to attain their noble objective.

(Mr. Adala, Kenya)

Kenya believes that the best way to achieve disarmament and peace is to take concrete and timely measures for peace and confidence-building and to make the development, production and acquisition of arms unnecessary, rather than waiting until States have achieved a high level of armament before beginning the disarmament negotiations. We therefore underline the importance of supporting efforts at all levels, particularly the regional, subregional and national levels, to avert the emergence of an arms race and to prevent the outbreak of armed hostilities. The basic prerequisite for reductions in military outlays and weapons purchases is a change in the political climate, marked by a reduction of local tension and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the development of regional and subregional confidence-building measures.

Kenya will continue to attach particular importance to the establishment of zones of peace. We are encouraged by the progress made so far by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean with regard to its being declared a zone of peace. Since the establishment of zones of peace in various parts of the world is an essential factor and ingredient in the wider process of complete disarmament, and given the current unipolarity in global politics, we sincerely hope that the entire international community will unreservedly support the call for convening, as early as possible, a conference in Colombo, with the participation of the Governments of the permanent members of the Security Council and all major maritime users of the Indian Ocean.

Mr. KHERBI (Algeria) (interpretation from French): It is hard to find words to express our feelings in connection with the natural disaster that struck the fraternal people of Egypt, the earthquake in Cairo. In these

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

sad circumstances, I wish on behalf of the Government and the people of Algeria to convey to the Government and the people of Egypt our sincerest condolences and to assure them of our sympathy and full solidarity.

Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Algeria is proud and pleased to see you presiding over the work of the First Committee. We are convinced it will be crowned with success thanks to your skill, your long experience and your commitment to the service of Egypt and the international community. I take this opportunity to express to you and the other Committee officers the warmest congratulations of the Algerian delegation. We pledge to cooperate with you fully in the interest of the success of our work.

Events since our last session give us grounds to make a positive assessment of the disarmament situation. Considerable progress has been made in that area through joint action by the two principal nuclear Powers. Only yesterday they were committed to a frantic race to acquire ever more murderous arsenals, yet today, thanks to the end of the cold war, they are partners in a disarmament process whose objectives we support and which we hope will be extended to weapons of all kinds.

Reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the two principal Powers have been agreed upon and should be welcomed and encouraged. The same is true of the limitation of the production of new weapons systems; so long as it is accompanied by the same will on the part of other nuclear-weapon States, this will constitute a valuable, encouraging step. It is good to note that these bilateral efforts are now complemented by the multilateral approach to disarmament.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

In that context, we look forward to the enrichment of the legal arms-limitation arsenal by the conclusion of the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a draft convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction. The Algerian delegation welcomes the success of these disarmament initiatives, even though we are aware that the genuine dangers of the nuclear threat have not been completely removed.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

Without wishing to denigrate measures already begun or implemented, we believe that further efforts are needed to enable the emergence of a new approach to disarmament that would be reflected, on the one hand, in the abandonment of strategic doctrines based on nuclear deterrence, and, on the other, in the adoption of significant measures towards nuclear disarmament, which remains undeniably the top priority in achieving the aim of general and complete disarmament, an objective already set by the international community at the special session on disarmament.

The new world situation resulting from the end of the cold war requires that we work harder than ever to ensure that the logic of dialogue and cooperation wins out over that of confrontation. Thus, we must break once and for all with the order founded on military supremacy and the race for technological and quantitative superiority in armaments.

The Algerian delegation believes that, today, disarmament questions must at last regain their full priority importance within the multilateral negotiating framework. These questions must no longer be dealt with in a theoretical or piecemeal way that begs the central issues. Since general and complete disarmament is henceforth an urgent necessity, we must try to understand it in its original definition, in which there is no alternative to authentic nuclear disarmament, the only way to free humanity from the threat of doom, to guarantee security for all, and to use nuclear energy only as a means of ensuring economic and social development by devoting it exclusively to peaceful purposes. For these reasons, bilateral and multilateral approaches must complement one another and merge in the interests of efficiency and necessity, to the extent that it is not only the responsibilities but also and above all the risks that must be shared.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

Other commitments must be assumed in order to reduce the threat to international peace and security. These commitments must take the form of the initiation of multilateral negotiations on the elimination of all nuclear weapons. If we truly wish to attain this goal, it is imperative that concrete measures be adopted immediately to lead to the cessation of all nuclear tests, which are at the heart of the problem. Commitments in this area could help towards converting the partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty into an instrument imposing a comprehensive ban on such activities everywhere and in all circumstances. For its part, Algeria unreservedly supports the efforts of the Amendment Conference of the partial test-ban Treaty leading to the conclusion of an instrument banning all nuclear tests.

We also believe that this important measure would be greatly enhanced if it were accompanied by an unequivocal expression of will on the part of those States possessing advanced military technology not to develop or manufacture new weapons or delivery systems that could pose an even greater threat to humanity, nor to deploy them in outer space, which has hitherto been free of all weapons of mass destruction. We feel that this is a possible and achievable measure for putting an end to the proliferation of all categories of weapons, beginning with the most lethal.

In a world endeavouring to bring about a qualitative change in international relations while scientific and technological progress is constantly strengthening man's power over nature, the atom must now become a force for good, and nothing should hinder the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy commensurate with the needs of humanity as a whole.

In this context, the strengthening of the efficiency and effectiveness of the safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

through appropriate measures winning the consensus of the international community, would benefit by being understood and carried out as a means of building confidence among States and encouraging the transfer of technology needed for the scientific, economic and social development of the developing countries. The quality and level of the relations that Algeria has fostered over the past few years with IAEA - both in the area of implementing safeguards for its two research and radioisotope-producing reactors and in that of technological assistance and cooperation - is indicative of my country's commitment to the Agency's objectives and to the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy. That same commitment won Algeria the presidency of the Agency's Board of Governors for 1992-1993.

In the area of disarmament, Algeria fully subscribes to the fundamental option of security for the benefit of all States, the promotion of which requires, first, the achievement of nuclear disarmament, then the elimination of other weapons of mass destruction, and finally the gradual and balanced reduction of conventional weapons at both the world-wide and the regional levels. Understood in that context, disarmament measures cannot help but contribute to the lessening of tension among States, but they cannot replace the settlement of problems, which can only be effected through lasting political solutions. Disarmament, then, is only one element of security; it is fundamental that we attack, first and foremost, the underlying problem of improving the political climate and conflict situations. It is clear that, in the absence of real political will and previously identified objectives, no disarmament measure can achieve the ultimate goal expected of it - guaranteeing world peace and ensuring equal security for all.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

Situated at the crossroads of Africa and the Middle East, Algeria has long been committed to their being free of all weapons of mass destruction. However, in the light of recent developments in those two regions, though there are some signs that this can be achieved throughout Africa, one is unfortunately led to the conclusion that for the Middle East this prospect is remote, notwithstanding the international community's unequivocal commitment to achieving that objective. This is the case because of the stubborn refusal of Israel, the only State in the region that has a nuclear capability and other weapons of mass destruction.

Algeria is honoured to be one of the States members of the Conference on Disarmament and to have thus taken an active part in the long negotiations to prepare the text of the draft Convention Prohibiting the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, which is before us at this session of the General Assembly. We welcome the conclusion of the negotiations on the draft Convention on chemical weapons, which we feel is a consecration of the multilateral disarmament effort.

In this respect, we should like to pay tribute to Ambassador von Wagner of Germany for his constant, intensive efforts as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, especially during the final stage of negotiations on the draft Convention. When it is adopted, this Convention will be the first binding, multilateral legal instrument on genuine disarmament that effectively eliminates an entire class of weapons of mass destruction with effective international verification. Designed to have a global scope, non-discriminatory application and universal adherence, the future Convention has special significance for all countries.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

Through our Foreign Minister, last May Algeria, a party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, reiterated its traditional position in favour of a complete ban on chemical weapons and their use and also in favour of their complete elimination, which would be the best way to eliminate the threat posed to mankind by this class of weapons. For this reason my country has always voluntarily refrained from possessing such weapons, designing them or seeking to acquire them by any means whatsoever.

While everyone should strive for the universality of all disarmament instruments, the fact remains that to be fully effective and to achieve the expected results, any effort to that end must be accompanied by concrete measures to eliminate the disparity in the defensive capacities of the States of a single region. That is why I believe it is both ethically unjust and politically undesirable for the achievement of the universality of such an agreement - which in itself, I repeat, is laudable - to lead to the perpetuation or the worsening of qualitative and quantitative imbalances in the capabilities of States. This is especially true of the Middle East region, where the Israeli nuclear threat weighs heavily.

Efforts made on the basis of that approach - that is, seeking to achieve the universality of the Convention on chemical weapons and taking significant measures to put an end to existing disparities and imbalances - will only strengthen the authority of that legal instrument, which we subscribe to because of what it means for the strengthening of everyone's security. While we have a right to hope that all countries will adhere to this important disarmament instrument, we believe it is vital that the preconditions for its universalization must be met, notably a balance in the obligations of States.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

The draft Convention on chemical weapons is a positive achievement of the Conference on Disarmament, and we can only be delighted at the long-awaited rehabilitation of the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. But, in the opinion of the Algerian delegation, this should also give rise to concern about the future of that important negotiating forum, which the international community instituted at the conclusion of the General Assembly's first special session devoted to disarmament. The finalizing of the Convention on chemical weapons should serve as a stimulus for action by the Conference on Disarmament, which we hope will engage without further delay in negotiations on other instruments in this universal disarmament effort, particularly in the nuclear field.

Only a very short time ago it was easy enough to blame the lack of progress in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the unfavourable international climate of a bipolar world. Today, however, when all can see the positive evolution of the international environment, we must hope that the Geneva Conference will be able to adapt to the current situation and to rehabilitate its original mandate so that it can finally tackle the tasks defined in the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly.

The movement that characterizes present bilateral negotiations should help create a propitious atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament, thus stimulating the indispensable complementary multilateral efforts.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

In this framework, Algeria stands ready to make a contribution to any initiative along these lines, and we would like to assure the current Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Servais of Belgium, of our willingness to cooperate in consultations on the agenda and the mandates of the special committees, as well as on the question of expanding the composition of the Conference on Disarmament.

Last year the Algerian delegation subscribed to the idea of creating a viable system for ensuring transparency in arms transfers, and we were motivated by a fundamental principle, namely, to envisage any disarmament initiative within the context of the realities of the geopolitical environment and as a function of the requirements and constraints of this environment. We had hoped that effective treatment of this question would encompass all categories of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and would take into account all other matters pertaining to transfers - productive capacity, stockpiles or the transfer of technology. How can we conceive of creating a truly effective mechanism while remaining ignorant of the various component parts of this mechanism? Our point is that until this system takes into account the fundamental elements within the system, we cannot reliably guarantee the practicality or the universality of this mechanism. My delegation believes that efforts in Geneva in the Conference on Disarmament should lead to rapid results in the direction of strengthening and broadening this transparency regime.

While we agree that the present world situation is now free of the bipolar structure with all its accompanying risks of conflagration, we cannot declare that our world has thus become a place where peace and security and justice reign for everyone. The rights of the Palestinian people are still

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

ignored; there have been difficulties and delays in the implementation of the settlement plan for the question of Western Sahara; unilateral and illegal measures have been taken regarding the island of Abu Mussa: these are all reminders that we must remain vigilant and respect the principles recognized and supported by the international community.

With the coming of a new era in international relations, perhaps it is justified to hope that we will achieve the objective of global peace and security enjoyed by all through establishing structures aimed at creating justice, enshrining the right to self-determination and the right to development, promoting human rights and, finally, preserving and defending the environment.

It is in this context that the United Nations has a paramount role to play. The contribution of the Organization must extend to all aspects of international peace and security. Is there any need to say that it would be an illusion to conceive of measures in the collective security system provided for by the Charter without a resolute commitment to reducing the flagrant disparities between the levels of development of nations? Or that these disparities can in themselves be sources of tension and therefore constitute a threat to international peace and security?

Peace and security are indivisible. The debate on the ways and means of guaranteeing them for all, within strict respect for the Charter's principles, must be open to all Member States. That is why it is imperative that international relations become more democratic, to ensure that narrow concepts will not prevail over the interest of the greatest number, for if they did, that would entail breakdowns that could have unpredictable consequences for world peace.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

Because of our geographical location, and because of the special link that exists between the region of the Maghreb and Europe, Algeria is following closely the process of security and cooperation on this continent, and we welcome the important decisions taken within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) with the aim of strengthening the gains achieved by peace in Europe. But we cannot help but mention that despite the close link between peace and security in Europe and in the Mediterranean, and despite declarations of intention, the Mediterranean dimensions of the processes under way within the CSCE have not yet been accorded the interest they deserve.

We hope that extra efforts will be made and that concrete measures will be adopted to give some substance to the proposals to approach the Mediterranean in a way similar to that in which Europe was approached in order to guarantee peace and security in the Mediterranean area.

As we mention the situation in the Mediterranean, my delegation would like at the same time to underscore all those factors which are an obstacle to the creation of a zone of peace and stability and cooperation there. These factors are continuing threats, military - even nuclear - presence, continued foreign occupation, the existence of sources of tension, the regular outbreak of serious crises and the economic and social disparities between the coastal countries. These are all realities which should force the Mediterranean countries to strengthen their bonds and to intensify cooperation among them. We remain convinced that the political settlement of the problems of the region is and must be the basis of new kinds of relations benefiting all the peoples in the region.

(Mr. Kherbi, Algeria)

It is in this spirit that the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union have undertaken over the past few years a series of consultations and talks with their European partners in the western basin of the Mediterranean and Malta. This process, which is called "Five plus five", is aimed at laying the foundation for multifaceted cooperation and trade between these countries to create the necessary conditions for strengthening peace and security in the region. While regretting that this process has been at present disrupted by certain events in the region, and that the timetables set within this framework have not been able to be respected, we hope that these passing situations would not stand in the way of the major cause, the Mediterranean enterprise, which is of prime importance to us.

It is on this note of hope that the Algerian delegation would like to see the work of this Committee contribute to the ideas of peace and justice and security for all.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of Hungary, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission, will introduce the report of the Commission.

Mr. ERDÖS (Hungary), Chairman of the Disarmament Commission (interpretation from Arabic): I have the honour of speaking in the beautiful Arabic language and expressing to you, Sir, the congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and wishing you every success in your activities.

(spoke in English)

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I have the honour to introduce the report of the Commission on its 1992 session. The report is contained in document A/47/42.

The report consists of four chapters and the same number of annexes, containing the result of the Commission's deliberations on various disarmament items on its agenda during the 1992 substantive session. While the first three chapters are relatively short and of a descriptive character, chapter IV sets out in a more detailed manner the conclusions and recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies. That part of the document truly and duly reflects the status that the Commission's deliberations have achieved this year.

The Disarmament Commission organized its 1992 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly, taking into account the guidelines of the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990.

(Mr. Erdös, Chairman, Disarmament Commission)

It should be pointed out that, pursuant to the reform programme, the Commission, at its organisational session held in December 1991, decided to include four substantive items in its working agenda. They are: "Objective information on military matters"; "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons"; "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security"; and "The role of science and technology in the context of international security, disarmament and other related fields". Let me point out here that the first item had already been discussed during the previous two sessions, and thus the final stage of its consideration had been reached, while the second through fourth items had been dealt with only in the course of a single session. Following the pattern of the previous year, four working groups were established, each to deal with one of the agenda items.

Let me recall that the Commission started the session with a general exchange of views on all agenda items. In the course of the debate 35 individual statements were made, and two statements on behalf of two groups of countries. The delegations thus had the benefit of hearing the views and suggestions of a total of 50 countries. The most important message of all those statements was a common desire to achieve progress in our common tasks. The report which is now before the Committee bears testimony to the significant success of the common efforts of all delegations.

With respect to the first item on the agenda, I am happy to state that as a result of strenuous deliberations and painstaking negotiations in Working Group I, chaired by Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden, the Commission was able to finalise its work in 17 meetings and numerous informal

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consultations, and it adopted by consensus the "Guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters", annexed to the report. The successful conclusion of the item was hailed by delegations as an outstanding achievement in the work of the Commission, and was commended as a good example in the faithful implementation of the provisions of the reform programme. In view of the adoption of a consensus text on the subject, a draft resolution is expected to be submitted soon to the General Assembly for endorsement.

The item regarding nuclear disarmament dealt with in Working Group II has been generally considered as perhaps the most difficult one, owing to the very nature of the subject. The wide scope of this item further hampers efforts to reach agreement on certain specific topics for deliberations in depth. It is not surprising that at this juncture the Commission was not able to make substantive progress on it. Although bilateral progress has been made in this field with regard to the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty) by the former Soviet Union and the United States and the recent follow-up agreement, as well as with regard to other unilateral disarmament measures announced by them, multilateral forums have yet to take significant steps in nuclear disarmament. However, a number of measures recently taken by some nuclear-weapon States and other States with respect to the non-proliferation Treaty and nuclear testing could, it is to be hoped, promote deliberations on the item next year in the Disarmament Commission.

After the end of the cold war and the improvement in international relations at the global level, the issue of regional disarmament has drawn significant attention from member States. Although the consideration of this subject in Working Group III has not yet resulted in conclusive

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recommendations, the deliberations did reflect the overwhelming concern and sense of urgency felt by all. Lists of elements related to regional disarmament, drawn up on the basis of deliberations this year, are contained in the Chairman's papers, annexed to the report of Working Group III. Despite the difficulty of the subject matter and the divergent views held by various delegations, this item should be concluded next year in accordance with the of the Commission's reform programme.

(Mr. Erdös, Chairman, Disarmament Commission)

A comprehensive overview of the role of science and technology in relation to international security and disarmament was taken by Working Group IV. Considerable progress on the subject has been made, and some general conclusions on certain specific issues have been achieved. It is expected that further concrete proposals and suggestions on this item will be put forward at the next session of the Commission with a view to achieving conclusive results, as is expected.

In making a short general assessment of the work of the Disarmament Commission, I can say that at the 1992 session the Commission achieved success in the implementation of the reform programme by concluding its consideration of the first item within the allotted time of three years. This is clear testimony to the fact that given the good will and cooperation of Member States, the necessary flexibility and a spirit of compromise on the part of all, the Commission is able to fulfil its mandate.

With respect to the organization of the Commission's work in 1992, I am glad to state that the enlightened implementation of the reform programme, with the responsive cooperation of all delegations, has freed the Commission from the procedural and organizational blockages of the past. I refer to such questions as the distribution of posts in subsidiary bodies and the duration of the session. In this regard, I believe that pre-session consultations proved to be useful and contributed greatly to the smoothness and efficiency of the Commission's proceedings this year.

The new arrangement by which meetings are scheduled logically in accordance with practical requirements made possible the full utilization of conference services in 1992. I am convinced that extensive and appropriate

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consultations between delegations, with the assistance of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, will also facilitate the work of the Commission in the future and will further enhance its performance.

Another organizational issue should be mentioned in this context. In expectation of a successful conclusion this year in the case of one of the four substantive items, two proposals have been put forward for consideration at the forthcoming organizational session of the Commission in December, namely, "International arms transfers", pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H, paragraph 10, and "General guidelines for non-proliferation, particularly weapons of mass destruction", which was proposed by Sweden with the support of a large number of delegations at the 1992 substantive session. It is therefore necessary that there should be consultations during the course of this session of the General Assembly, so that the Commission may come to a satisfactory decision at its organizational session to be held at the beginning of December.

Before I conclude this presentation, let me raise yet another question which, while of an organizational character, may have a considerable bearing on the real substance of the Commission's work. In May, acting in my capacity as Chairman and as a result of extensive consultations during this year's substantive session, I initiated informal talks - first in the Bureau and then in the Committee of the Whole - about the need for certain adjustments in the Commission's methods of work.

The talks led to a general feeling among the delegations that the heavy workload they have to handle every year is not in harmony with the very strict time-limits imposed on the Commission. Consequently it seems that there is a

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need for slight modifications in the structuring of work and in the distribution of subjects over the years and for some other fine-tuning. The corrections or modifications would not call for any fundamental change in the ways and means that were adopted unanimously in 1990. None the less, if properly selected and implemented, they could facilitate the successful discharge of the Commission's mandate.

I do not want to burden the Committee with any more detail in this regard, but I think it necessary to call delegations' attention to the need for further informal consultations, which I, as Chairman of the Commission, with the active support and participation of delegations, intend to carry out in the forthcoming weeks. The aim is simple: to develop consensus among all the delegations by the time the Commission holds its organizational session in early December. This, I believe, is the key to a successful substantive session in 1993.

Lastly, I must not fail to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and cooperation, for the businesslike manner in which they conducted the work of the Commission this year and, most of all, for their desire and readiness to reach mutually acceptable compromises. Tribute should be paid to the members of the extended Bureau of the Commission, the eight Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur, Mr. Bob Hiensch of the Netherlands, and, in particular, the Chairmen of the four Working Groups - Ambassador Carl-Magnus Hyltenius of Sweden, Ambassador Prakash Shah of India, Ambassador Ricardo Luna of Peru and Ambassador Emeka Ayo Asikiwe of Nigeria - for their efficient and hard work in carrying out the tasks entrusted to the Commission. On behalf of all the delegations and on my own behalf, I wish to

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express thanks to the staff of the Office for Disarmament, Affairs under the direction of Mr. Prvoslav Davinic, for their valuable assistance and, in particular, to Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, the faithful Secretary of the Commission, as well as his colleagues, who served as secretaries of Working Groups.

I now present to the Committee the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as contained in document A/47/42.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania): I should like, first, to join those representatives who have already congratulated you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Your well-known diplomatic experience and skills give us full confidence that our deliberations will be productive and successful. I wish, through you, Sir, to convey our congratulations also to the other members of the bureau. I express our gratitude to Mr. Robert Mrosiewics - now Under-Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland - for his very competent and efficient guidance of our work last year.

Following the end of the cold war and the rapid fundamental changes in international relations, the time has come to work for a better and safer world, for a new international order based on the concept of collective, cooperative security.

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

The revitalization of the United Nations and its increased role in the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security is, more than ever before, enjoying general support among Member States. Dialogue and cooperation are the best response to security problems, whether at the world level or at the regional level.

In Europe, the Paris Charter signed at the highest level in November 1990 and the documents adopted by the Helsinki summit meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in July this year not only call for the strengthening of standards of behaviour but also provide the mechanisms to achieve increased confidence and security, arms control and disarmament, and crisis management. The way in which the CSCE has been considering the question of security shows that this concept has multiple dimensions and is not at all limited to military aspects.

Like other new Central European democracies, Romania is undergoing an unprecedented historical test, namely, simultaneously to create new political structures and new, workable economic market mechanisms. Very recently parliamentary and presidential elections - the first since the adoption of our new, democratic Constitution - took place in my country. Definitely, we see them as a landmark in our endeavours for political pluralism, the rule of law, democracy and a market economy.

The effort to restore and consolidate democracy in Romania is not isolated from but is closely linked to the international environment. Romania aims at developing normal relations of cooperation with all States, and in particular with its neighbours. Our foreign policy pursues Romania's irreversible anchorage within the Euro-Atlantic space and its viable institutions, the increase in the country's contribution to the building up of

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the Euro-Atlantic community of values, and a new continental security order. We are in the process of negotiating an association agreement with the European Communities that is about to be concluded and a cooperation agreement with the European Free Trade Association. At the same time, like other Central European countries, Romania entered into a special relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and attaches particular importance to its participation as a partner in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. May I stress the fact that NATO was the first Western organization to adopt from the very beginning a clear-cut, non-discriminatory attitude towards Central and East European countries, that laid a solid basis for building a united Europe. Also, an important positive development is the opening of the Western European Union (WEU), with which my country has close relations, to Central and Eastern Europe.

The post-Helsinki II forum is a significant step towards ensuring, at the regional level and as part of an overall approach, a resolute concentration on security issues. It provides for efforts in areas such as arms control and disarmament, confidence- and security-building measures, the implementation and verification of existing treaties in this field, conversion of military complexes, the establishment of flexible forms of cooperation with other European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The CSCE forum for security through cooperation must seek balanced solutions which would benefit general European security, the security of all subregions of Europe and the security of all participating States.

All these are conceived as an integral part of world security and of United Nations endeavours in this direction.

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

Today the security of any country from this region cannot be conceived of except as a result of harmonious interaction among the United Nations, the CSCE, NATO and the WEU, and associated with increased efforts at the subregional level.

The report of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace" includes a set of inspiring ideas and valuable proposals which, once examined, developed, adopted and implemented, would bring us closer to the objective the United Nations pursues, namely maintaining international peace and security. Especially relevant are the proposals aimed at peace-keeping and peacemaking, including the imposition of sanctions under Article 41 of the Charter. The implementation of these proposals requires two sets of measures: first, to secure the financing of the respective operations; and, secondly, in accordance with Article 50 of the Charter, to alleviate the burden of participating countries which register important losses and have important economic difficulties. With respect to the latter measure, a solution could be, as suggested by Romania at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the creation of a standing compensation fund. The existence of such a fund would encourage States to cooperate fully with the Security Council in situations of crisis management.

Of paramount importance in this time of turbulence following the fall of communism and the assertion of the right to self-determination of peoples is what the Secretary-General of the United Nations called "preventive diplomacy", which includes, among other things, preventive measures to avoid bloodshed and military confrontations. One of these measures is the immediate withdrawal of all foreign occupation troops still stationed on the territories of the newly independent States without their consent. The United Nations,

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and the Secretary-General personally, can play an important positive role in assisting the respective negotiations and in monitoring such withdrawals.

The overall international context offers new opportunities for openness, dialogue and progress in the area of arms control and disarmament. Since our Committee met last year, a number of important developments have taken place with regard to the arms control agenda.

In May 1992 the Lisbon Protocol to the START Treaty made Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine partners to the START Treaty along with the United States. We also consider the commitment of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine to become parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States in the shortest time to be very important. We welcome the agreement reached by the United States and Russia last June on further reductions in strategic arms, and wish success on the talks that are under way to put this agreement into formal treaty form.*

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* Mr. Suh (Republic of Korea), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

We also welcome the decline in the number of nuclear tests and hope that the moratorium unilaterally declared by France, Russia and the United States will continue beyond the declared deadline. Committed as we are to the objective of the complete cessation of nuclear tests, for obvious practical reasons we also favour the principle of gradually reaching that objective. We support the re-establishment at the 1993 session of the Conference of Disarmament of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban, and look forward to increasing our contribution to the substantive work of the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events.

One cannot over-emphasize the growing concern that, according to reliable estimates, over 20 countries now have or are developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and the means to deliver them. Obviously, this is a matter involving serious danger, and we support putting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction at the top of the arms control and disarmament agenda.

Romania is fully committed to, and is actively participating in, the increasing multilateral efforts to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. In keeping with its non-proliferation commitments, Romania has a firm policy of, and has adopted special regulations on, control of exports of all items related to the production of weapons of mass destruction. Last year my country became a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. In the same spirit, Romania has accepted the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and joined this group. We have close relations with the members of the Australia Group, which is working to increase the effectiveness of the control of chemical and biological materials.

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The importance of the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) for containing the spread of nuclear weapons cannot be over-estimated. We welcome the recent accession to the NPT of France and China. As a result of that action, all the permanent members of the Security Council have acceded to the Treaty which is one of the pillars of a stable international system of peace and security. In this context, we have noted with great interest the proposal by the President of the United States that the Security Council offer positive security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

An efficient non-proliferation regime requires appropriate measures to prevent access to nuclear materials, equipment and technology for other than peaceful purposes. My country insists upon the full universalization of the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) system of safeguards, as well as of other recognized international arrangements in the field of nuclear transfers, which are an integral part of the non-proliferation regime.

As for the 1995 review conference of the Parties to the NPT, we are ready to support the extension of the Treaty for an unlimited period, and we look forward to participating actively in the preparatory process, which will be launched at this session of the General Assembly.

This year the Conference on Disarmament took a historic step forward with the conclusion of negotiations on the draft chemical weapons convention. Romania participated in the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the draft convention and, like other countries, has taken a number of constructive steps to increase confidence and promote its early conclusion. Unequivocally committed to the achievement of a total and comprehensive ban on chemical weapons, my country has repeatedly declared during the last two years

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

that it possesses no chemical weapons and has no intention either to produce or to acquire them in the future.

The convention is the first multilateral disarmament agreement with effective verification provisions that bans an entire class of weapons of mass destruction. Romania, along with other States, intends to sign the Convention in January 1993 in Paris. Our delegation is one of the more than 130 sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/47/L.1. We consider this large sponsorship a first step; it offers encouraging prospects for accession to, and entry into force of, the convention.

The regional approach to arms control and disarmament continues to gain ground, both at the practical and the conceptual levels. The security of individual States and stability at the regional or subregional levels could benefit substantially if due account is taken of the specific characteristics and requirements of each region and the interests of all parties involved. Indeed, at this very session we have heard more than ever before about arms-control and disarmament measures taken in different parts of the world. The debate is becoming more specific in this respect, with obvious efforts to make regional and even subregional contexts major points of reference, in direct interaction with the concrete stability and security situations.

As regards Europe, we should mention first the agreement on the provisional application of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Concluding Act of the Negotiation on Personnel Strength of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, signed at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Summit in Helsinki on 10 July 1992. They provide the basis for further arms control and disarmament efforts on the European continent. The Treaty on Open Skies, negotiated by the members of the North

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Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the participants in the former Warsaw Pact, and signed this year, creates the most extensive regime of openness and transparency yet negotiated multilaterally. The Treaty provides for the potential adherence of all CSCE States, including the independent States of the former USSR. It also provides for accession by States outside Europe.

Another important step in the European context was the adoption of the Vienna 1992 Document on Confidence- and Security-building Measures.

With the conclusion of these agreements we are completing a whole chapter in the European history of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. We now look forward to further negotiations and measures taking into account the radical changes in the political environment at the regional and subregional levels.

(Mr. Neagu, Romania)

Significant progress has also been made this year in the field of transparency as an efficient confidence-building measure. The establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the successful conclusion by the Disarmament Commission of the negotiations on guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters are but two relevant examples. As a sponsor of resolution 46/36 L and as Vice-Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for this year, Romania has been closely associated with these important achievements.

This brings me to some general considerations on the agenda, work and efforts for further improvement of the activities of the multilateral deliberating and negotiating bodies in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Allow me to begin with the Conference on Disarmament, the unique body for negotiating arms-control and disarmament agreements. We share the view that it is necessary that we concentrate our efforts at the Conference on specific subjects ripe for the attainment of concrete, generally accepted solutions, and that we review the agenda and organization of work in that light. We also support the enlargement of the membership of the Conferencw, which would permit direct participation in the negotiations and in the adoption of decisions by all those who are ready to make a real contribution to these endeavours.

As for the Disarmament Commission, we consider that it has a good agenda and is developing an efficient approach to its activities. The proof of this is the finalization of the first substantive agenda item, concerning objective

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information on military matters, with the second agenda item, on the regional approach to disarmament, having a good chance of being finalized through the adoption of a substantive document. We share the opinion that, owing to constraints in terms of time and resources, the Commission should maintain on its agenda three items, each of them having to be examined and finalized in three years.

At last year's session of the General Assembly, the First Committee took significant steps in rationalising and streamlining its work. An action-oriented approach gained ground and the number of draft resolutions diminished.

Our delegation welcomes the Committee's decision to hold a combined general debate, and consider together draft resolutions, on arms control and security-related agenda items. This increases the efficiency of our work and at the same time underscores the important role disarmament measures play in promoting security. We consider that greater attention should be paid to regional issues by combining and aggregating arms control and security-related aspects. As for the draft resolutions, we hope that highly controversial approaches and biased language will be avoided.

In conclusion, I want to assure the Chairman and all the other members of the Committee of the full, constructive cooperation of the Romanian delegation for the productive and efficient conclusion of our debates.

Mr. PONCE (Ecuador) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to congratulate Mr. Elaraby on his election to the chairmanship. I am sure that his experience and his knowledge of the issues before the

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

Committee will contribute to the success of our work. I congratulate also the representatives of Finland, the Republic of Korea and Poland, who, as the Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur of the Committee, will certainly help us attain our goals.

Last January's Security Council Summit Meeting highlighted the various factors affecting international security. The documents and discussions that came out of that Summit Meeting confirm the growing importance of the non-military aspects of world security. We welcome the end of the era of the balance of terror, but we are concerned by situations and policies that affect the stability of the international community and jeopardize peace within our countries and in relations between them.

In the economic sphere, decisive factors in the deterioration of the living conditions of the vast majority include: continuing negative financial flows to developing countries owing to the lack of a final solution to the external-debt problem; ongoing protectionism in developed countries; the absence of technology transfers to the countries of the South; and the conditionality and diminution of international cooperation. This grave economic and social crisis, exacerbated by corrective economic measures adopted in the majority of developing countries, has given rise to serious political upheavals that threaten institutional stability, democracy and respect for human rights - achievements our peoples won at the cost of great sacrifices.

In the political sphere, matters of concern that threaten the increase in international cooperation we all desire now that the East-West confrontation is over, include heightened nationalism and religious intolerance, and

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

increased racism and xenophobia in response to the mass migrations imposed on the peoples of developing countries, along with the tendency in some countries to replace international law with an extension of their own jurisdiction beyond their borders.

In this international situation, the United Nations system must fully shoulder its responsibilities and take up these challenges. The Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" contains ideas that deserve close analysis with a view to achieving a balance between defending the universal values enshrined in the Charter and respect for the principle of the sovereign equality of States - a cornerstone of the Organization.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have a fundamental role to play in promoting international peace and security. Both bodies are in need of renewal, as was clearly stated by our Heads of State during the general debate in the General Assembly. The Assembly must work more efficiently. The Security Council should be restructured to eliminate the anachronistic veto system; the Council's membership should reflect current international realities. It must carry out its work with the transparency demanded by the States Members of the Organization.

The primacy of international law and clear and non-discriminatory "rules of the game" must be the foundation of our action if we really want to solve our common problems.

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

The growing importance of non-military elements in the maintenance of international security in no way implies that arms control and disarmament are no longer a priority for the international community. On the contrary, the link between disarmament and development has become increasingly clear to most of our States. As long as weapons of mass destruction exist, humanity is threatened, and this Committee cannot waver in its efforts to destroy this sword of Damocles hanging over us all. Ecuador is opposed to any attempt to dilute or minimize the importance of this issue, and feels that the recent replacement of the Department for Disarmament Affairs with the Office for Disarmament Affairs is simply an action taken by the Secretary-General to comply with a mandate of the General Assembly to rationalize the administrative structure.

As other delegations have said, there were significant achievements in arms control last year. The imminent approval of a Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, negotiated in the Conference on Disarmament, is a real historic achievement for its text is comprehensive, establishing verification systems and balance in the various issues it deals with. We regret, however, that certain justified aspirations were not recognized, such as those relating to the inclusion of herbicides, equitable membership of the Executive Council, and a shortening of the deadlines for the elimination of this type of weapon.

We commend the agreements on arms limitation between Russia and the United States. We trust that these bilateral efforts will continue, for the nuclear arsenals remain awesome. The delegation of Ecuador agrees with the Chairman's assessment at the beginning of our debate that the time seems to have come for the United Nations to play a more active role in this kind of negotiation, reflecting the changes in the international reality.

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

Ecuador welcomes the nuclear-test moratoriums of Russia, the United States, and France, responding as they do to repeated appeals of the international community. The South Pacific Commission, of which Ecuador is a member, has opposed such tests in our region for years. The temporary moratorium declared by France encourages us to continue our efforts, and we trust that the nuclear Powers, aware of what the majority of States has said in this and other forums, will extend the deadlines of these moratoriums until we finally achieve a definitive and total ban on such tests. To that end, we would urge the opening of negotiations on a treaty to be taken up at the next session of the Conference on Disarmament.

A few days ago, the representative of Chile, speaking of nuclear weapons, said:

"Far from being an element of collective security, nuclear weapons represent a potential crime against humanity." (A/C.1/47/PV.4, pp. 9-10)

The nuclear deterrence doctrine has never been proven to be true, and the real dangers of losing control over existing nuclear arsenals prompts my delegation to join the fairly large group of delegations that, at the Conference on Disarmament, called for the creation of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, pursuant to the provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We share the hope of the representative of Mexico that the Conference will be able to reach agreement on a treaty on nuclear weapons along the lines of the Convention on chemical weapons now before us, and that the same political will that prevailed in the negotiations on the Convention will endure as we take up nuclear weapons.

(Mr. Ponce, Ecuador)

Ecuador supports all measures to avoid nuclear proliferation, including the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). But we realize that the only way to remove the threat of a nuclear disaster once and for all is the total elimination of such weapons. That task was entrusted to the Conference on Disarmament many decades ago, with little result to date. The membership of that forum must be enlarged so that all States wishing to participate in making decisions that directly affect them can be represented there. It must respond with renewed vigour, taking advantage of the historic opportunity we are experiencing today, to the unflagging call of world public opinion for the destruction of this type of weapon.

In the last few months, Latin America and the Caribbean have made major contributions to strengthening international security and achieving regional disarmament. The achievement of peace in Central America and the strengthening of the models for integration; the solution to the border dispute between Honduras and El Salvador; the constructive dialogue between Ecuador and Peru to deal with their historic problems; and the Cartagena Declaration, in which the Presidents of the Andean countries committed themselves, inter alia, to renouncing the possession, production, development, use, testing, and transfer of all weapons of mass destruction - are all clear proof of the atmosphere of understanding and cooperation that the countries of the region wish to preserve.

Furthermore, the imminent accession of Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Chile to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and France's imminent accession to Additional Protocol I of that Treaty, are decisions that Ecuador welcomes. We trust that they will soon bring about the achievement of our objective that our region become the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.